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CHAPTER V

THE YUNG-NING PLAIN

The Yung-ning plain (Hli-dü, which the natives pronounce more like Hli-di and the Na-khi of Li-chiang call Lü-dü) comprises an area of about 100 square li and is the most important part of the entire Yung-ning territory. The Hli dji (waters of Hli) traverses it in great curves and in wintertime it is the home of many thousands of ducks, cranes and herons. The cranes come from the Koko Nor, where they breed, to winter in the south.[1] A better place for duck-shooting is difficult to imagine. Less than half of the plain is cultivated and the peasants are strictly prohibited by their chiefs from growing rice. If rice were grown the plain could support three times the population it supports to-day.

1. VILLAGES ROUND THE LAMASERY

The Yung-ning Lamasery is the most important establishment and is situated on the western end of the plain, 10 li from the foot of Lion Mountain (Senge-ge ga-mu). Several villages cluster around the lamasery, of which the most important one is Boa-ts'o-gkv, (Place where the Hsi-fan [Boa] danced), pronounced by the Yung-ning people Ba-tso-gu. It is mostly inhabited by Li-chiang Na-khi and is also called P'i-chiang-ts'un 皮匠村 (Tanners' village). It is a nondescript conglomeration of miserable houses, the street an impassable quagmire covered with green scum. No improvements are permitted by the rulers of Yung-ning for fear of attracting outside settlers. In the middle of the road are the steaming-vats, where the people cure ox hides and deerskins. This village is immediately beyond the white Chhorten (mchhod-rten) (lama reliquary monument) and the little stone bridge. Here also Li-chiang Na-khi shoemakers ply their trade, making genuine Na-khi shoes, both of cow and Shan-lü 山羔 or serow hide, the latter a species of Capricornis.[2] They also make tall Tibetan boots, supply-

[1] Of the cranes which inhabit the Yung-ning plain and marshes the most common is *Grus nigricollis* (black-neck) the Gko of the Na-khi. This species breeds in the Koko Nor of north-east Tibet, and winters in Yün-nan. It was first described by the Russian traveller PRZEWALSKI from north-east Tibet, where I also collected it, and where its breeding-places were observed by me. Of the stork family, *Ciconia nigra* is often found in pairs in the flooded fields, while ducks such *Anas crecca*, *Anas platyrhyncha*, and *Anas nyroca* are found on the banks of the Hli dji as well as on the Yung-ning Lake. On the lake disport themselves the famous divers with lobate toes which the Na-khi call Dsu or Gvi-dsu. Two species are found, *Proctopus nigricollis* with black necks, and the North China species *Poliocephalus ruficollis poggei*, collected first in the province of Ho-pei. Other water-birds common in Yung-ning in the winter are *Mergus merganser orientalis* (the Ndą-lä-lä of the Na-khi), *Casarca ferruginea*, the sheldrake (called Mba-shi-mba-lu-me by the Na-khi), *Nyroca fuligula*, *Nyroca nyroca* and others.

[2] The species found on the Li-chiang snow range and north to Mu-li as on Mt. Ki-bo is *Capricornis sumatraensis milne-edwardsii* David. It is known to the Na-khi as Yi, in their books the female is called Yi-mä mbu-här (Female serow with the blue mane).

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ing the whole of Yung-ning with footwear, besides sending caravans with shoes to the Li-chiang market.

Back, or north, of the lamasery are the hamlets of A-la-wa, La-ngua, and Ga-ra, the latter north-west. Southwest, a little over one li distant, is the hamlet of K'ai-chi and diagonally across from the latter, on the southern bank of the Hli dji, is the hamlet of Ba-chü. Behind the village of K'ai-chi is a hill and here the ruins of the ancient seat of the Yung-ning chiefs are still to be seen. The place is called K'ai-chi wa-wu. The old trees, planted many generations ago by the chiefs of Yung-ning around their former yamen, still stand, among them a ginko tree which had been brought from Peking.

From this hill the whole plain and the zigzag course of the Hli dji can be seen to advantage.

2. THE T'U-SSU YAMEN

West of K'ai-chi is the bridge which spans the Hli-dji, and beyond the famous camping place of Kublai Khan, the Jih-yüeh-ho (La-pa-ddü of the Na-khi). If we follow south-west we come to the junction of the Sä dji[1] and Bu-llu dji, the former has its source on the north-eastern slopes of the Shwua-gu Range, and the latter on Mt. Dzoan-pu, a part of Wua-ha or the Ta-yao Shan. Here at the junction of these two streams is situated the hamlet of T'o-djri. If we cross the bridge at K'ai-chi where the stream is known as K'ai-chi Ho (Hli dji) and follow south, past the hamlet of Ba-chü, we come to the yamen of the T'u-ssu of Yung-ning. Two tall, spreading leguminous trees (*Sophora japonica*, the Na-khi Li-law ndzĕr) stand at the entrance which leads into a succession of courts as in any Chinese yamen. The present T'u-ssu is a young man called A Min-han 阿民漢 and is the 22nd generation, counting from his ancestor Pu-tu-ko-chi who was appointed native ruler of Yung-ning in the 14th year of Hung-wu (1382). The boy, who is said to be 25 years (Chinese) of age, became T'u-ssu in the 19th year of the Republic, the twelfth moon and 1st day (January 19th, 1931). His father died in 1927. His grandfather, A Ying-jui 阿[illegible]瑞, who had retired and lived on the banks of the Yangtze died in 1938.

At one time, during the Mohammedan rebellion (1856–1876), A Ying-jui's father, A Heng-fang, fled from Yung-ning into the Yangtze valley, where he kept in hiding. He had several wives but not one of them had presented him with a son. While in hiding he took unto himself a Hsi-fan woman from Mu-li. When the danger was past he returned to Yung-ning and, hearing that the Hsi-fan woman was with child, he sent for her. She gave birth to a son who was the late T'u-ssu A Ying-jui, and the grandfather of the present T'u-ssu of Yung-ning.

From the official residence of the Yung-ning chiefs a trail leads to the lake which is at all times passable, while another trail across the plain can only be used in winter. Beyond the yamen the path enters a valley, and crosses a dry, rocky stream-bed which has its source near the cave Shi-wua-lo-'a-bu.

[1] The words *sä dji* (Li-chiang Na-khi, *sä gyi*) are applied to a small stream which has its source in high mountains, usually such as are covered with eternal snow; glacier streams are usually called by this name.